

MANAGING THE CADET/SENIOR TEAM

Scope: Good squadrons are lead not by a senior staff or a cadet staff, but by a team of cadets and seniors working together. The cadet/senior team environment is dynamic: as cadets mature, the level of guidance provided by seniors should change to match the cadets' leadership competencies. This seminar explores that dynamic by considering the responsibilities of cadet and senior staff positions, what leadership roles are appropriate for cadets, and what responsibilities can not be delegated by seniors. The seminar concludes with a discussion of the factors seniors should consider when managing the cadet staff over the long-term.

Format: Guided Discussion

Duration: 50 minutes

Objectives:

1. Identify Cadet Program staff positions and describe their relationship to each other.
2. Identify responsibilities of seniors and cadets and discuss how they can divide their labor.
3. Describe what leadership roles are appropriate for cadets during each Phase.
4. Identify and discuss considerations in managing the cadet staff as a system.

Resources: “Who Comprises a Cadet Program Staff?” hand-out; “Leadership Expectations” hand-out; note-taker; PowerPoint slides.



STARTING POINT

[Introduce yourself and state the seminar's topic.]



INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Not to fill a pail, but light a fire. What does that quote mean to you?

Anticipated Responses: Help cadets think for themselves; allow cadets to make mistakes and learn from them; share in the excitement of a young person's potential.



[Next slide] This quote represents our purpose as the adult leaders of CAP cadets. In this seminar, we'll discuss how the senior staff can light the fire of cadets, divide the labor of leading the squadron, and in so doing, we'll answer the perennial question: Who runs the Cadet Program?



MAIN POINT #1: BOTH CADETS & SENIORS COMPRISE THE STAFF

[Guided Discussion]

What positions comprise the senior staff? What are the basic roles and responsibilities of each of those positions?

[Refer students to the "Who Comprises a Cadet Program Staff?" hand-out. Lead them in a group discussion of each position, and encourage them to list the responsibilities of each position in the corresponding box on the hand-out.]

Anticipated Responses:

[Note: This list does not attempt to list every conceivable responsibility. There can be a great deal of flexibility in staff duties. *Don't get bogged down in hair-splitting.*]

Squadron Commander

- Select or approve the staff
- Set or approve goals, projects, and schedules
- Promote cadets
- Resolve disputes
- Lead the squadron as a whole

Deputy Commander for Cadets / Deputy Commander

- Supervise the implementation of the overall Cadet Program
- Supervise and mentor the senior member Cadet Programs staff
- Guide and mentor cadets, especially the top staff
- Assist the commander

Leadership Officer

- Plan and conduct leadership classes
- Conduct or supervise drill and ceremony training
- Supervise the unit's physical fitness program
- Guide cadet staff in their role as trainers / instructors

Aerospace Education Officer

- Plan and conduct aerospace education classes
- Coordinate special aerospace activities (ie: rocketry, STK, AEX, etc.)
- Supervise cadet AE mentors
- Guide cadet AE instructors

Chaplain / Moral Leadership Officer

- Conduct moral leadership forums
- Ministry of presence
- Mentoring and counseling

Cadet Commander & Cadet Structure [See mini-transition]

MINI-TRANSITION: Please turn your hand-out over and we will consider the cadet structure in detail.

What positions comprise the cadet staff? What are the basic roles and responsibilities of each of those positions?

[Again, refer to the "Who comprises a Cadet Program staff?" hand-out.]

Anticipated Responses:

[Note: This list does not attempt to list every conceivable responsibility. There can be a great deal of flexibility in staff duties, and the range of cadet grades.]

Cadet Commander C/Capt – C/Lt Col

Supervise, mentor, and lead the cadet staff and cadet corps
Make personnel assignment recommendations
Develop or recommend plans, policies and procedures

Cadet Deputy Commander C/Capt – C/Lt Col

Assist the cadet commander
Supervise and guide the flight commanders

Cadet Executive Officer C/Capt – C/Lt Col

Assist the cadet commander
Manage the cadet staff's administrative affairs

Cadet First Sergeant C/MSgt – C/CMSgt

Assist in inspections
Supervise and guide the flight sergeants
Model military bearing, attitude, discipline, etc.

Cadet Flight Commanders C/2d Lt – C/Capt

Supervise, mentor, and lead the cadets in their flight
Train cadets in basic leadership topics
Develop leadership skills in the flight sergeants and element leaders

Cadet Flight Sergeants C/SSgt – C/CMSgt

Assist the flight commander
Prepare cadets for inspections and follow-up
Lead the flight in drill
Model military bearing, attitude, discipline, etc.

Cadet Element Leaders C/A1C – C/TSgt

Provide basic guidance to the cadets in their element
Tutor cadets and provide individualized training
Model military bearing, attitude, discipline, etc.

TRANSITION: In this discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the cadet and senior staff, we've seen a lot of overlap. Let's approach the issue by considering which responsibilities belong to seniors, which belong to cadets, and which responsibilities are shared.



MAIN POINT #2 DIVIDE THE LABOR TO TEACH RESPONSIBILITY

[Guided Discussion]

Perhaps the most effective way of building a sense of responsibility in cadets is to give them some ownership in the squadron. **How ought a cadet/senior team divide the labor of leading the squadron? (1) What responsibilities belong exclusively to seniors? (2) Which responsibilities should the cadets own? (3) Which responsibilities should cadets and seniors share?**

[On a whiteboard (or something similar), make three columns. List the students responses to the three questions above in those columns.]

Anticipated Responses:

<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Shared</i>	<i>Cadets*</i>
Supervise / chaperone cadets	Set goals for the unit	Motivate cadets
Interact with parents	Plan activities	Provide first-line training
Ensure safety	Discipline issues	Develop and recommend plans for cadet activities
Guide cadet staff	Coach and counsel cadets	Develop and recommend meeting schedules
Approve plans, schedules, projects	Conduct training, teach classes	Drill and ceremonies
Select cadet commander; approve other staff		Uniform inspections
Final authority on promotions and awards		Physical fitness
Finances		Cadet staff meetings

[*Cadets: In discussing cadets' responsibilities, a common theme should be that cadets perform these tasks with senior guidance, as the cadets advance in grade. The issue of cadet grade will be discussed in depth in Main Point #3, and senior "guidance" is discussed in the follow-up question below. Of course, this list is not intended to be definitive.]

[Follow-up question]

The concept of senior guidance, senior oversight, or senior supervision keeps coming up as we discuss the division of labor. What do those concepts mean? What do they not mean?

[Again, use a whiteboard (or something similar) to record students' responses.]

Anticipated Responses:

Senior Guidance Is

Allowing cadets to make mistakes, and helping them learn from them
Resisting the temptation to take charge and lead the squadron single-handedly
Having cadets come up with plans, but helping them refine and quality-check the plans
Making expectations clear to cadets and allowing them freedom to lead, so long as they stay within those boundaries
Holding cadets accountable for their actions
Allowing cadets to take the spotlight
Mentoring and coaching cadets using the methods described in the "Leading Indirectly" seminar (L3)
As with the quote we used to begin this seminar, guiding cadets is not about filling a pail, but lighting a fire.

Senior Guidance Is Not

Making all the decisions and telling cadets exactly what to do, without having them think for themselves
Leading without working through the cadet chain of command
Fussing over matters of style, instead of allowing cadets to reach the objective in their own way
Assuming the Cadet Program runs itself, and not constructively criticizing the cadet staff's leadership
Trying to be a cadet and not the adult

TRANSITION: In our discussion, a common theme has been that as a cadet advances in grade, more responsibility and authority should be added to their plate. Let's continue that discussion by looking at what types of leadership expectations we should set for cadets in each of the four phases.



MAIN POINT #3: MATCH CADETS WITH THE RIGHT ROLES

[Guided Discussion]

Each phase has a leadership focus. For example, in Phase I, cadet airmen are learning how to follow. In Phase IV, cadet officers experience executive-level leadership. There should be a direct connection between a cadet's grade, the level of leadership you expect from them, and the job you assign them.

[Note: students' responses may differ slightly from what is listed below. What is most important is that they recognize that seniors should expect a little more from cadets, as the cadets advance from phase to phase. List students' responses on a whiteboard.]

Let's get into specifics now. For example, what should we expect to see in the attitudes of Phase I cadets?

Anticipated Response:

Displays a positive attitude; optimistic; enthusiastic; is team-orientated.

Ratchet up that expectation one notch. What do you expect of Phase II cadets, the NCOs who are learning to lead small teams?

Anticipated Response:

Maintains a positive attitude and encourages good attitudes in others; does not flaunt rank or authority.

Ratchet up the expectation yet another notch. What do you expect of Phase III cadets, the officers who are learning to command and lead cadets by working through the NCOs?

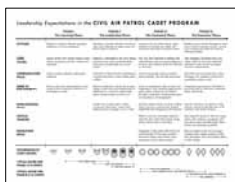
Anticipated Response:

Conscious of own performance; takes initiative to develop new skills; self-motivated and able to motivate others

And what of Phase IV cadets? What type of attitude do we expect from our very best cadets?

Anticipated Response:

Resilient; shows mental discipline in working to achieve long-term goals; welcoming of change; has habit of continual self-improvement



MINI-TRANSITION: Just as we can set expectations for cadets' attitudes, we can set expectations for their inter-personal skills, communication skills, core values behavior, and other leadership attributes. [Distribute the "Leadership Expectations" hand-out.]

This hand-out does that, and also shows the connections between leadership expectations for each phase, cadet grade, and the cadet staff positions that match those leadership expectations and grades.

Why are there blank areas in Phases I and II?

Anticipated Response: As followers and small team leaders, Phase I and II cadets are not ready to focus on “delegation skills” or some of the other higher-level leadership functions. Therefore, we should not set any expectations for them in those areas.

Why do Phase I cadets have four categories of expectations, while Phase IV cadets have seven categories of expectations?

Anticipated Response: Phase IV cadets are ready to experience higher-level leadership functions, but we also expect them to continue growing in the basic leadership functions, too – attitude and core values, for example.

TRANSITION: We’ve shown how there is a direct connection between our leadership expectations of cadets, their grades, and the cadet staff jobs we assign them. For our final discussion in this seminar, let’s examine some of the issues we should consider in managing the cadet staff in the long-term as a whole system.



MAIN POINT #4 MANAGE THE CADET STAFF AS A WHOLE SYSTEM

[Guided Discussion]

Cadets come and go, so it is up to senior members to perpetuate the squadron's successes, and manage the cadet staff over the long-term as a whole system. By speaking of the cadet staff as a whole system, I mean that it is not enough just to give each individual cadet the right staff job, we need to look at all the cadets as they are now, and anticipate where they will be in 6-months or a year from now, and plan for that future so the squadron and the cadet staff continues to flourish. [As you ask the discussion questions below, you will want to keep referring back to the "Leadership Expectations" chart.]

Is it necessary to fill every staff position? Do you need to always have at least two flights, a cadet executive officer, and every other position filled?

Anticipated Response: The majority of our cadet units are large enough to support just one flight of cadets. Instead of using NCOs to serve as flight commanders, make the flight sergeant and element leader positions meaningful. If the squadron is top-heavy with cadet officers, consider using the deputy and executive officer positions, but eliminate those positions if the squadron becomes bottom-heavy.

What should you do if you do not have a cadet officer? What if you're new and the cadets are all airmen, or maybe you have a couple NCOs? What positions do you fill and why?

Anticipated Response: If you believe there should be a correlation between leadership expectations, grade, and the staff position, then perhaps instead of having a cadet commander, your top cadet should be a flight sergeant. Or if all you have is airmen, rotate the airmen through element leader positions. As the cadets gain rank, promote the flight sergeant to flight commander and then on to cadet commander. If logistically feasible, perhaps some cadet officers from nearby units can help the squadron get going and serve as role models for the junior cadets.

Is there any way to plan for the future? For example, you know your top cadets will graduate high school and move on at some point. What can you do to prepare the squadron for that change?

Anticipated Response: Have the cadet commander mentor their likely successor(s). Adjust the cadet staffs' terms of office to allow the junior cadet to assume command before the more experienced cadet leaves for college. Focus on making the element leader and flight sergeant positions worthwhile, and then rely on those jobs more when the top cadets move on and the unit becomes bottom-heavy.

If the cadet staff's abilities are changing, if one day you have some great cadet officers and another day you have airmen and NCOs, how do those changes affect the type of senior guidance you provide?

Anticipated Response: With a new squadron, the seniors need to take a more active role simply because the cadet staff (if there is one) lacks the leadership skill or subject matter expertise to lead the cadet corps. If the unit has a handful of cadet officers,

the seniors can be more indirect with their leadership. As the cadet staffs' abilities and experience ebbs and flows, the senior staff should change to meet those needs.

As you manage the cadet staff as a system, in what way do you need to account for cadets' ages?

Anticipated Response: Recognize that younger cadets have plenty of time to advance in grade and to serve in a variety of staff positions. Older cadets have less time. Unless the rank disparity is huge, try to let the older cadet have the higher position. Manage the staff so that many cadets have opportunities to lead.

Along those same lines, what are your thoughts about terms of office for cadet staff positions, especially the term for the cadet commander?

Anticipated Response: If one cadet holds a job for too long, it prevents other cadets from having opportunities to lead. By setting a 6-month term limit for all positions, cadets can be rotated in a timely manner. And, if they are doing poorly, they "save face" by not having to be "fired." The term could always be extended, too.

TRANSITION: As we've seen from this discussion, it is up to the seniors to manage the cadet staff's development and "career" paths so that the squadron can continue its mission of developing cadets into good citizens and aerospace leaders. Let's close by taking a final look at some of the conclusions from this seminar.



CONCLUSIONS & CLOSING

Conclusions. [See slide.]

Closing. With cadet officers, NCOs, and airmen all trying to become good leaders, a CAP squadron really is a one-room schoolhouse. Use that to your advantage. As this quote suggests, arrange your squadron so that it truly becomes a team of cadets and seniors, with experienced cadets applying their leadership skills under your guidance while introducing new cadets to the challenges CAP has to offer.

